

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 1196

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, MILI, PINT, ET, SO, CU

SUBJECT: CUBAN-IRAQI COMMUNIQUE

REF: (A) BAGHDAD 958, (B) BAGHDAD 959

1. GRANMA, MAY 6, PUBLISHED IRAQI-CUBAN COMMUNIQUE ISSUED
AT CONCLUSION OF VISIT OF IRAQI VICE-PRESIDENT TAHA MUHYIDDIN
MA'ROUF. FOLLOWING ELEMENTS APPEAR SIGNIFICANT FROM CUBAN
PERSPECTIVE:

--NO MENTION IS MADE OF ERITREAN QUESTION. CURRENT CUBAN POSITION
IS SUPPORT OF ERITREAN POLITICAL SOLUTION WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF
CONTINUED MAINTENANCE OF ETHIOPIAN SOVEREIGNTY - A POSITION WHICH
IRAQIS APPEAR NOT TO SHARE.

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--NO MENTION IS MADE OF HORN OTHER THAN TANGENTIAL STATEMENT
THAT INDIAN OCEAN AND ITS EXTENSIONS SHOULD BE FREE OF "IMPERIALIST
BASES."

--WHATEVER DISCREPANCIES EXIST ON HORN, HOWEVER, ARE COMPENSATED
BY BY:

-IRAQI ENDORSEMENT OF HAVANA AS SITE FOR 1979 NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT AND CUBAN ENDORSEMENT OF BAGHDAD AS SITE FOR 1982 MEETING.

-CUBAN ENDORSEMENT OF AL-BAKR'S LEADERSHIP UNDER BAATH PARTY PRINCIPLES (NO MENTION IS MADE OF IRAQI COMMUNIST PARTY OR PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNIST PARTY IN LEADERSHIP GROUP) AND JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT OF DESIRE TO DEVELOP DEEPENED PARTY-TO-PARTY LINKS BETWEEN CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND IRAQI BAATH (SEE HAVANA 944.)

-CUBAN FAILURE TO MENTION PLO (IN CONTRAST TO MENGISTU-CASTRO COMMUNIQUE.) IRAQI-CUBAN ENDORSEMENT OF "PALESTINIAN RESISTENCE MOVEMENT", RATHER THAN PLO, IS PRESUMABLY GESTURE TO HABBASH AND OTHER IRAQI-SUPPORTED "REJECTIONIST" ELEMENTS.

2. COMMENT: WE HAVE RECEIVED AS YET NO RELIABLE INFORMATION ON CONTENT OF MAROUF VISIT. LOCAL ARAB DIPLOMATIC SOURCES STATE THAT HABBASH RECEIVED SOME KIND OF CUBAN COMMITMENT FOR SUPPORT DURING HIS RECENT VISIT - BUT SOURCES ARE UNSURE OF ITS SPECIFICS. ARAB DIPLOMATS ARE SKEPTICAL, HOWEVER, ABOUT ANY NEW CUBAN MILITARY COMMITMENT TO MAINSTREAM PLO (CAIRO 12239). WITH REGARD TO POSSIBLE IRAQI-CUBAN OIL SWAP (REF B), AMEDEO BLANCO, CHIEF OF AFROASIA DEPARTMENT OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE, RECENTLY TOLD USINT OFFICER THAT CUBANS WOULD STUDY POSSIBILITY OF ANY SUCH A SWAP, WHICH HE APPEARED TO VIEW AS UNLIKELY, IN CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTEXT OF AVAILABILITY OR UNAVAILABILITY OF PETROLEUM FROM USSR (WHICH CURRENTLY PROVIDES ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OF CUBAN NEEDS). IRAQI EMBASSY HAS STATED THAT, GIVEN VAGARIES OF SUGAR PRICES, BAGHDAD WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO PROVIDE PETROLEUM ON ANY OTHER BASIS THAN CASH. IF AN OIL SWAP IS EXECUTED, THEREFORE, IT MIGHT WELL NEED TO INVOLVE SOVIET HARD CURRENCY FINANCING PLUS TRANSPORTATION (SINCE CUBANS DO NOT HAVE HIGH SEAS TANKERS). REGARDING IRAQI LOAN POSSIBILITY, NATIONAL BANK HERE HAS CLAIMED (SEE HAVANA A-003, DATED JANUARY 18) THAT PREVIOUS BANK NEGOTIATIONS IN BAGHDAD HAVE FOCUSED ON CUBAN DESIRE TO ARRANGE FOR IRAQI PAYMENTS FOR SUGAR IN CURRENCIES OTHER THAN SWISS FRANCES. WE, HOWEVER, UNDERSTAND THAT CUBAN EFFORT TO POST-FINANCE ITS RIO DAMUJI-CLASS FISHING BOATS WITH LAZARD FRERES MAY HAVE ENCOUNTERED PROBLEMS. IT IS, THEREFORE, NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT IRAQIS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY MAY HAVE ENTERED FINANCING PICTURE. INDEED, IRAQI EMBASSY HERE HAS REMARKED (HAVANA 944) THAT CUBA WILL BE COOPERATING WITH BAGHDAD ON FISHERY MATTERS. LANE UNQTE VANCE

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